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Feed the Future is the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative. For more information, or [to subscribe to this publication](#), please visit www.feedthefuture.gov.

HOT TOPICS: GENDER & FOOD SECURITY

March 8, 2012 was International Women's Day, which aims to inspire women and celebrate their achievements all over the world. Read on to learn how Feed the Future and its partners highlighted women's important role in food security over the past month.

Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index Launched at United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

On February 28, 2012, Feed the Future launched the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) at the [56th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW). This index is the first-ever measure to directly capture women's empowerment and inclusion levels in the agriculture sector. It will measure such indicators as women's input in productive decisions, ownership of assets, control over income, and leisure time.



Credit: Elisa Walton/USAID

The WEAI was spearheaded by the [United States Agency for International Development](#) (USAID), the [International Food Policy Research Institute](#), and the [Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative](#) of Oxford University. It will be used for performance monitoring and impact evaluations of Feed the Future programs around the world. The index has been piloted in three countries so far (Bangladesh, Guatemala, and Uganda) and will now be rolled out in all Feed the Future [focus countries](#).

The launch event at CSW generated excitement around this innovative tool, which will generate for the first time concrete data on whether the U.S. Government's activities under Feed the Future are having the intended impact of empowering women. With the hope of providing a public good, Feed the Future will make the WEAI broadly available to development partners within and beyond the U.S. Government who can apply the index in additional countries. This collaborative effort will begin to build a wealth of knowledge on women's empowerment and gender equity.

You can find [more resources and information](#) on the index at FeedtheFuture.gov, or [read the full press release here](#).

[Download the WEAI Brochure.](#)

[USDA HOSTS FIRST U.S.-CHINA AGRICULTURAL SYMPOSIUM](#)

[WORLD COCOA FOUNDATION AFRICAN COCOA INITIATIVE TO BENEFIT 100,000 COCOA FARM FAMILIES](#)

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE

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New Borlaug Fellowships will Promote Women's Leadership in Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in cooperation with USAID recently announced the 2012 [Norman E. Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program](#) for ten Feed the Future focus countries (Ghana, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Haiti, and Honduras), as well as Nigeria. These Fellowships are offered as part of Feed the Future's [Borlaug 21st Century Leadership Program](#). Only female applicants will be selected for this year's Fellowships, which are intended to increase the number of women in leadership positions in agriculture. The deadline for submitting applications for all countries is April 6, 2012. [Visit FeedtheFuture.gov to read more on this story.](#)

[Read more stories on Gender and Food Security.](#)

FOOD SECURITY HIGHLIGHTS

On World Water Day, Secretary Clinton Calls Clean Water "Essential" for Eradicating Hunger and Poverty

Nearly 700 million people will lack access to safe drinking water in 2015, an issue that is closely linked to the related challenges of food security and global health. Noting that water is "an essential ingredient of global peace, stability and security," U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton marked World Water Day on March 22 with remarks at the Department of State in Washington, DC. "Reliable access to water is essential for feeding the hungry, running the industries that promote jobs, generating the energy that fuels national growth, and certainly, it is central when we think about how climate change will affect future generations," Clinton said. [Read more.](#)



Credit: Bijay Gajmer

[Read the full transcript](#) of Secretary Clinton's remarks or [download the new Feed the Future Fact Sheet on climate change.](#)

USDA Hosts First U.S.-China Agricultural Symposium



USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and Chinese Minister of Agriculture Han Changfu sign a Plan of Strategic Cooperation in agriculture. Credit: USDA

During the symposium, Vilsack and Changfu signed a historic Plan of Strategic Cooperation that will guide the two countries' agricultural relationship for the next five years. "China and the United States have an opportunity and responsibility to work together to help increase the availability and use of sustainably produced food for a rapidly growing world population," Vilsack said. [Read more.](#)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack joined Chinese Minister of Agriculture Han Changfu in Des Moines, Iowa on February 16 for the first U.S. – China Agricultural Symposium, which focused on bilateral cooperation between the two nations in the areas of food safety, food security, and sustainable agriculture. During the symposium, Vilsack and Changfu signed a historic Plan of Strategic Cooperation that will guide the two countries' agricultural relationship for the next five years. "China and the United States have an opportunity and responsibility to work together to help increase the availability and use of sustainably produced food for a rapidly growing world population," Vilsack said. [Read more.](#)

HEARD ON THE HILL

[ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS URGE SUPPORT FOR FEED THE FUTURE IN CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET HEARINGS](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

[FUTURE OF FOOD AND NUTRITION GRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE](#)

[SAIS YEAR OF AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE – “GROWING FOOD: NEW PLACES, NEW TECHNOLOGIES”](#)

[INTERACTION FORUM](#)

[GLOBAL LEARNING EXCHANGE ON BEST FIT APPROACHES TO EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICES](#)

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World Cocoa Foundation African Cocoa Initiative to Benefit 100,000 Cocoa Farm Families

The World Cocoa Foundation African Cocoa Initiative launched on March 13 at the Ghanaian Ministry of Finance in Accra. This [Global Development Alliance](#) partnership is supported by Feed the Future through USAID, the World Cocoa Foundation, and the [Sustainable Trade Initiative](#). It will help overcome the productivity gap between the world's cocoa supply and demand by fostering public-private cooperative investments in cocoa and agriculture, improving the genetic quality and productivity of cocoa varieties under cultivation, expanding farmer education and training programs, and improving the agricultural input supply chains that serve farmers. [Read more.](#)

Department of State's Fulbright Program Hosts Global Food Security Seminar at Penn State

From February 29 – March 4, Fulbright students from more than 35 developing countries who are pursuing master's or doctoral degrees at U.S. universities in the fields of agriculture, environmental sciences, biology, economics, engineering, and public health gathered at Pennsylvania State University for a seminar on addressing global food security challenges. The seminar, hosted by the U.S. Department of State, introduced the more than 65 participants to technological innovators, scientists and researchers, policy groups, and representatives from the public and private sectors who are working toward advancing sustainable, agriculture-led growth in developing countries to increase the access, availability, and affordability of nutritious food. [Read more.](#)



Tania Galindo Castaneda, a master's candidate in soil microbiology at Penn State, welcomes Fulbright students to the Global Food Security seminar. Credit: Steve Williams/Penn State University

[Read the State Department's full press release](#) on the Global Food Security Seminar or [visit Penn State's Ag Science Magazine Blog](#) to learn more and see more photos from the event.

Administrator Shah Awards General Mills with U.S. Global Citizenship Award for Work on Food Security

On February 24, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah traveled to Minnesota to present General Mills employees with the U.S. Global Citizenship Award in recognition of their volunteerism through [Partners in Food Solutions](#) (PFS). PFS is a non-profit organization that links the technical and business expertise of volunteer employees from major food processing corporations to small and medium-sized mills and food processors in the developing world. Currently, PFS is working with 30 food processors on 77 projects in Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, and Malawi. [Read more.](#)

FIELD STORIES

MCC's Agribusiness Centers Enhance Food Security, Agricultural Productivity in Ghana



A new agribusiness center constructed by the Millennium Challenge Corporation in Tamale, Ghana. Credit: Alda Kauffeld / USAID Ghana

In Ghana, one of the obstacles to food security and growth in the agriculture sector is the challenge of transporting and storing crops after they are harvested. The [Millennium Challenge Corporation](#) (MCC) is helping address these challenges through the construction of agribusiness centers (ABCs), aggregating points for grains that give private sector investors an opportunity to positively impact processing, storage, and access to inputs like seeds and fertilizer for farmers. MCC is constructing ten ABCs in nine Ghanaian districts, each one equipped with a primary processing shed, a warehouse, an agro-input shop, and offices. [Read more.](#)

Tanzania's "Hunger Hero" Shares Feed the Future Solutions to Rising Food Prices

On March 6, Tanzania's "[Hunger Hero](#)," Dr. David Nyange, spoke about Tanzania's rising food prices and their impact on food security and development at an event hosted by the Tanzania Country Level Knowledge Network ([CLKnet](#)), a group whose mission is to promote broad-based involvement and participation on key development issues in Tanzania. Dr. Nyange works with USAID on Feed the Future in Tanzania. Dr. Nyange's presentation focused on solutions to rising food prices in Tanzania, and resulted in a productive dialogue about the various components of Feed the Future and the cumulative impact the initiative will have for Tanzanians. [Read more.](#)



Dr. David Nyange.
Credit: USAID / Tanzania

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE

New Regional Center for Innovation Will Advance Horticulture in Southeast Asia

The [Horticulture Collaborative Research Support Program](#) (CRSP), led by University of California – Davis, recently opened a "Regional Center for Innovation" in Bangkok in partnership with Kasetsart University. The center will be a regional hub for the Horticulture CRSP's activities, including training, research, outreach, and the creation of a Global Horticultural Information

Center. This center, in combination with planned “sister” regional centers of innovation in East Africa and Central America, will help to network researchers, farmers, extension workers, and relevant private sector partners, serving as repositories for knowledge on horticulture and facilitating technology adaptation and dissemination programs in Feed the Future focus countries. The Horticulture CRSP’s priorities include sustainable crop production, post-harvest technology, food safety, market access, and financing. [Read more.](#)

Feed the Future Launches New African Goat Production Project

The African Goat Production Improvement workshop held last November in Nairobi, Kenya launched a new Feed the Future project to enhance livestock breeding and productivity. This workshop was the first in a series of activities planned for the goat improvement project over the next five years. The new project will improve understanding of genetic diversity in African goat populations and develop new tools and methods to breed resilient parasite- and disease-resistant goats. [Read more.](#)



Credit: Scott Bauer/USDA

[Read USDA’s blog](#) on this Goat Production Project.

U.S. Increases Funding for Agriculture Research

Charlene Porter, Department of State IIP Digital: The United States has stepped up funding for research to develop new climate-resilient cereals, high-producing legumes, and disease-resistant crops and livestock, according to a top official with the U.S. Agency for International Development. “Research is at the heart of Feed the Future,” said Julie Howard, Chief Scientist in USAID’s Bureau for Food Security and the agency’s senior adviser for agricultural research, extension, and education. Howard noted that USAID is spending \$120 million for crop and animal research and training in 2012, triple the amount it spent in 2008. [Read more.](#)

HEARD ON THE HILL

Administration Officials Urge Support for Feed the Future in Congressional Budget Hearings

During the month of March, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and USAID Administrator Shah went before Congress to testify on the Obama Administration’s FY 2013 Budget Request for International Affairs. As part of his testimony before the [House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs](#), Administrator Shah noted that the U.S. Government’s investments in food security through Feed the Future have had tremendous impacts around the world, citing illustrative examples from Haiti, where a pilot program for rice growers increased yields by almost 190 percent, and Kenya, where Feed the Future has helped over 90,000 dairy farmers increase their total income by a combined \$14 million.

“These investments are working,” said Shah. “Overall, since we began the initiative in 2008, our 20 target countries have increased their total agricultural production by an average of 5.8 percent. That’s over eight times higher than the global average increase of 0.7 percent.” [Read more.](#)

[Learn more about the President’s Budget for Fiscal Year 2013.](#)

HOT TOPICS: GENDER & FOOD SECURITY (cont.)

Oxfam “Sisters on the Planet” Event Harnesses Star Power to Promote Women’s Role in Fighting Hunger



Actor Kristin Davis, Oxfam America President Ray Offenheiser, and Senior Advisor to the President Valerie Jarrett. Credit: Shiloh Strong/ Oxfam

On International Women’s Day, 2012, Oxfam America hosted more than 70 powerful women from around the United States and the world in Washington, DC for a [Sisters on the Planet Summit](#) to lobby U.S. policymakers to support women’s access to the resources and rights they need to feed the world. Convening more than 100 meetings on the Hill with lawmakers, Oxfam Ambassadors including actress Kristin Davis, former Haitian Prime Minister Michelle Pierre-Louis, and Top Chef Masters competitor Mary Sue Milliken asked Congress to support Feed the Future, which builds the capacity of small-scale women farmers. Sisters on the Planet also lobbied Members of Congress to adopt reforms to U.S. food aid. [Read more.](#)

Feed the Future caught up with celebrity chef Mary Sue Milliken and other Oxfam Ambassadors to discuss the importance of global food security and women’s role in fighting hunger. Check out the video on [Feed the Future’s Facebook page!](#)

Feed the Future Scholarships Support Agricultural Research in Senegal

On International Women’s Day, 2012, Feed the Future launched a scholarship program focused primarily on women students in Senegal enrolled in training courses in agricultural research. The 140 scholarships, worth a cumulative \$1.5 million and funded through USAID, will support a variety of educational activities ranging from undergraduate studies to PhD programs in the United States at Virginia Tech University, a partner in Feed the Future programming.



USAID/Senegal Deputy Director Alfreda Brewer (center) with some female agricultural scholars in Senegal on International Women’s Day. Credit: Zack Taylor / USAID

To commemorate the launch, USAID/Senegal Deputy Director Alfreda Brewer participated in a ceremony at Gaston Berger University in historic Saint-Louis, Senegal’s original capital city. [Read more.](#)

AWARD Fellows Organize Exhibition to Encourage Mozambican Youth to Pursue Careers in Agriculture

What started in November 2011 as an informal exchange of ideas between Paula Pimentel and Marta Francisco, both 2010 recipients of [AWARD Fellowships](#) (funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Feed the Future), turned into a successful exhibition of agro-processed products and inputs by local female agribusiness professionals in Mozambique. Held in

December in Namaacha, the event was intended to give young people (and especially young women) the opportunity to meet with role models working successfully in the agriculture sector. [Read more.](#)



At an agricultural exhibition in Mozambique, participants enjoy cakes and cookies made from local agro-processed products. Credit: Tahila Pimentel

Feed the Future Partners in Tanzania Strive for Better Gender Integration in Projects

On International Women's Day, 2012, Feed the Future Tanzania held a one-day Gender Planning Workshop for implementing partners to reflect on key economic, policy, and social challenges and opportunities for women. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss how to reinforce the critical role of gender in Feed the Future activities, to understand gender integration best practices, and to establish a process for continual information sharing related to gender across Feed the Future implementing partners. [Read more.](#)

Did You Know?

You can now follow Feed the Future on Twitter and Facebook! Join in the conversation and tell us why global food security matters to you.



Next week, Feed the Future will be answering questions on the new **Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)** on Twitter! The WEAI is the first measure to directly capture women's empowerment and inclusion levels in the agricultural sector. But what are the components of the Index and how does it work in practice? How can it be applied in different projects and contexts? Tweet #AskAg on April 3 for answers!

Join the #AskAg Twitter chat on April 3 at 12 pm EDT to hear directly from WEAI experts Emily Hogue and Tania Tam of USAID's Bureau for Food Security. Tweet questions to @Agrilinks and use #AskAg to join the chat. This event is hosted by Agrilinks, USAID, and Feed the Future.

[Click here to learn more!](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **March 31 (Boston)**
[Future of Food and Nutrition: A Multidisciplinary Graduate Research Conference](#)
- **April 17 (Washington, DC)**
[SAIS Year of Agriculture Conference](#)
[“Agriculture – Growing Food: New Places, New Technologies”](#)
- **April 30 – May 2 (Arlington, VA)**
[InterAction Forum](#)
- **June 6 – 8 (Register by May 1) (Washington, DC)**
[Global Learning Exchange on Best Fit Approaches in Extension and Advisory Services](#)

NEWS & MEDIA

News

[CGIAR report says farming needs ‘climate smart’ revolution to feed the world – BBC](#)

March 29, 2012, Paul Karaimu (ILRI)

[Ag official: Future global food security, supplies depend on agriculture researchers, educators](#)

March 28, 2012, Kathleen Phillips (AgriLifeToday)

[How to eradicate hunger: Economically empowering rural women](#)

March 27, 2012, Rahim Kanani (Forbes)

[Investing in agriculture most effective way to eradicate poverty in Africa](#)

March 26, 2012 (United Nations)

[USAID Prioritizes to Boost Impact in Africa](#)

March 22, 2012, Michael Bowman (Voice of America)

Op-Eds

[The importance of international aid](#)

March 26, 2012, Lt. Gen. Daniel W. Christman (Pittsburgh Post Gazette)

[Empowering women vital to world food supply](#)

March 21, 2012 (Reuters)

Blogs

[Global Hunger: Let’s Talk Game Change](#)

March 23, 2012, Paul Weisenfeld (USAID IMPACT)

[Global food security: The biggest challenge for our world](#)

March 14, 2012, Richard Attias (The Huffington Post)

[Getting more out of food aid](#)

March 7, 2012, Ellen Levinson (The Hill)

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

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<http://feedthefuture.gov/newsletter>.